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S E C R E T ROME 003882

SIPDIS

PM/PPA FOR RACHEL FEATHERSTONE; EUR/PGI FOR TABITHA OMAN;
NSC FOR MARTINA STRONG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/06/2014

TAGS: [KPKO](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IT](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY ASKS FOR AFRICAN FOCS AND FURTHER U.S.
INPUT ON GENDARME INITIATIVE

REF: STATE 206032

Classified By: POLITICAL MINISTER-COUNSELOR THOMAS COUNTRYMAN FORREASON
S 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1.(U) This is an action message. Please see Paragraph 14.

2.(S) Summary. Italy believes that African countries must comprise at least half of the countries invited to send trainees next year to the Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units (COESPU) in Vicenza. Italy recommends that the Department choose at least two sub-Saharan countries and one Partnership for Peace (PfP) country from its Tier Two list, along with India, Morocco, and Jordan from the Tier One list. The Carabinieri have arranged to move its non-commissioned officers training center from Vicenza and complete material preparations by spring 2005. The MOD has approved the COESPU project but is delaying release of the project proposal because of financial concerns, including uncertainty about how much the U.S. will contribute. To push this project along, Italy suggests that the U.S. send a technical team by the end of November to assist in completing planning and budget assessments. Quick U.S.-Italian agreement on trainee countries and clearer mutual understanding on budget issues are key steps toward presenting the COESPU project before G-8 partners. End Summary.

3.(U) POLMIL Officer delivered Reftel demarche to MFA G-8 Office Head Giampaolo Cantini on September 26. Carabinieri, MOD, and MFA officials met to discuss the document and other COESPU matters on September 28. POLMIL Officer engaged in further conversations with Cantini on September 29 and October 4.

Candidate Countries for COESPU,s First Year

14. (S) Italy does not agree that the first year,s trainee countries should come solely from Reftel,s Tier One list. The problem from the Italian perspective is that, from the African continent, the Tier One list includes only Morocco; there are no sub-Saharan countries. Cantini did not doubt the technical accuracy of the State Department,s evaluation of countries in terms of their experience in peacekeeping operations and their existing institutional ability to sustain a gendarme peacekeeping force. But the under-representation of Africa that would result from selection based entirely on those criteria would contradict the goal of the G-8 peacekeeping initiative. Cantini recalled that the gendarme initiative had been originally conceived in terms of enhancing African peacekeeping capability and that the British have already designated Africa as the focus for their G-8 presidency. Pointing to current difficulties in finding peacekeepers for Darfur, Cantini noted that the G-8 aim was not to train Polish or Dutch gendarmes to go to Africa, but to foster endogenous African peacekeeping capability as rapidly as possible. Industrialized countries with gendarme capabilities should be providing COESPU with teachers, not students. While Italy does agree that COESPU,s scope should be global rather than restricted to Africa, under-representing Africa would undercut the project,s validity in the eyes of G-8 partners and make it hard to attract funding support.

5.(C) Of the six to eight countries Italy hopes will send trainees to COESPU,s first year courses, Italy,s strong view is that a minimum of half of the countries must be from Africa. Italy also believes that, on the whole, trainees should come from developing rather than industrialized countries.

6.(S) Accepting (and appreciating) the technical value of the U.S.-provided lists, Cantini suggested the following composition of countries to approach for the first year,s courses: India (Tier 1), Jordan (Tier 1), Morocco (Tier 1) plus at least two sub-Saharan countries from the Tier 2 list plus one PfP country (Cantini suggested Ukraine because of its proven willingness to participate substantially in PKOs). Cantini invited the U.S. to use the information it gathered in generating the two-tier lists for judging which sub-Saharan countries would be best able to benefit from COESPU training.

Status of the Project

7.(U) On October 1, Carabinieri Colonel Maurizio Mezzavilla replaced Colonel Domenico Libertini as head of the COESPU and European Gendarmes projects. Both Cantini and Libertini have expressed satisfaction with the choice of Mezzavilla, who brings experience as MSU commander in Bosnia.

8.(U) The Carabinieri have set up a task force (nucleo iniziale di formazione), commanded by a two-star general, to undertake the physical establishment of the training center. The training center for non-commissioned officers currently located at Vicenza will be relocated to Velletri, near Rome, starting in December 2004. The Carabinieri will complete alterations and equipment setup at the Vicenza facility in the first months of 2005.

9.(U) As a means of introducing COESPU to future participants, the Carabinieri are prepared to conduct a seminar in December or January. Cantini has suggested inviting representatives from the following countries and organizations: G-8 countries, Euro-Gendarme countries, EU, NATO, OSCE, UN, AU, ECOWAS, and possibly IGAD. The Carabinieri will schedule the seminar once the project proposal is disseminated to G-8 partners.

10.(U) Cantini reported that the Carabinieri now believe that initial hopes to initiate COESPU training courses in early 2005 were over-optimistic. Instead, the Carabinieri anticipate holding the first course in early summer or, at the latest, the beginning of September 2005. The important thing, Cantini said, is to begin on the right foot.

Financial Questions Remain

11.(C) MOD has approved but not released the full COESPU project proposal. At this point the MFA has received only a summary without financial details. Cantini stated that the delay reflects continuing MOD/Carabinieri concern about taking on one-time and permanent new costs in a period of budget cuts. The MFA has been pressing MOD to furnish a detailed estimate of costs, which the MFA guesses will be somewhere in the neighborhood of five million Euros annually (including the costs of bringing and equipping students). More than once, Cantini said that the MOD and MFA were looking forward to more clarity about the eventual U.S. financial contribution. Cantini said that Italy understands COESPU as a joint initiative and expects its U.S. partner to contribute "in kind": that is, on a basis commensurate with the cost Italy will bear.

Request for U.S. Technical Team Visit

12.(C) Italy wants further interaction with the U.S. in completing planning. Cantini, speaking for both the Carabinieri and MFA Political Director Giampaolo Massolo, suggested that this is the right time to bring a U.S. technical team to Rome and Vicenza for the purpose of ironing out details of what it will take to get COESPU up and running. The team should include military officers knowledgeable about the constabulary aspects of peacekeeping missions and, most importantly, with experience in establishing didactic and training programs. Cantini believes that a U.S. technical team visit before the end of November would provide the extra push needed to complete planning and move to the operational stage.

13.(C) Cantini stressed Italy's hope that the U.S. team would come with solid information about what the U.S. will be prepared to contribute financially.

14.(C) Action Request: Embassy Rome asks PM/PPA to follow up its successful July visit to Italy by sending a team whose members would have the military and technical experience to review and assist in completion of Italian plans. The team should include at least one member qualified to assist with financial planning. We hope this visit can happen quickly, preferably by the end of November. End Action Request.

Next Steps: Details Needed for Sherpas, Meeting

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15.(U) The MFA, encouraged by President Bush's mention of the U.S.-Italian Global Peace Operations Initiative in his September 21 UNGA speech, has been spreading the word about COESPU. Massolo outlined the project at the September 20 G-8 political directors meeting in New York. Mezzavilla will discuss COESPU in more detail at the G-8 Clearinghouse meeting on African Peacekeeping in Washington on October 7-8.

16.(C) The next step is the October 15 Sherpas, meeting, at which the U.S. and Italy hope to lay out the COESPU proposal

to G-8 partners and begin soliciting partner support. Assuming that the official project proposal is available by then (and that the U.S. clears on it), Cantini said the key information that partner countries will look for at the Sherpas' meeting will be: 1) a list of needs along with cost estimates; and 2) the list of countries to be invited to the first year's courses. These items, and particularly the financial needs assessment, are not yet accomplished. Cantini speculated that, if Italian Sherpa Giovanni Castellaneta had to discuss COESPU today, he would be prepared to offer only a general picture of the project. Given Italy's budget concerns, Cantini said, Castellaneta will not get out ahead of whatever has been firmly agreed on by Italy and the U.S.

Comment

17.(C) To reach our goal of presenting a U.S.-Italian project proposal to G-8 partners on October 15, we need to decide quickly on a list of trainee countries to approach for the first year. (Bringing those countries, or alternates, on board may take somewhat longer.) Italy is firm that COESPU should maintain a primary, though not exclusive, focus on Africa. Given the statements issued at Sea Island and the continuing G-8 emphasis on Africa, it is indeed hard to see this project attracting much partner support otherwise.

18.(C) Uncertainty about the extent of U.S. commitment to sharing the financial burden is contributing to the MOD's slowness in releasing the project proposal. More clarity from the U.S. side) or, at a minimum, reassurance that Italy will not find itself left alone to make up the difference between major new costs and eventual G-8 partner contributions) might help shake the project proposal loose. Announcing the visit of a State Department technical team to help wrap up planning should also push things along. End Comment.

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